### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA Richmond Division

Case No. \_\_\_3:23cv330

PREPARED FOOD PHOTOS, INC. f/k/a ADLIFE MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS CO., INC.,

Plaintiff,

v.

ANDERSONS NECK, LLC d/b/a
ANDERSONS NECK OYSTER COMPANY,

Defendant.

### **COMPLAINT**

Plaintiff Prepared Food Photos, Inc. f/k/a Adlife Marketing & Communications Co., Inc. ("Plaintiff") states the following as its Complaint against defendant Andersons Neck, LLC d/b/a Andersons Neck Oyster Company ("Defendant"):

#### THE PARTIES

- 1. Plaintiff is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Florida with its principal place of business located in Broward County, Florida.
- 2. Defendant is a limited liability company organized and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia with its principal place of business located at 1696 Cherry Row Lane, Shacklefords, VA 23156. Defendant's agent for service of process is Laura D. Hild, Forest Hills Station, PO Box 14144, Richmond, VA 23225.

### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

3. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338(a).

- 4. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because it has maintained sufficient minimum contacts with Virginia such that the exercise of personal jurisdiction over it would not offend traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.
- 5. Venue properly lies in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1400(a) because Defendant or its agents reside or may be found in this district. "The language 'may be found' means any district which may assert personal jurisdiction over a defendant." Johnson v. Sky Media, LLC, No. 1:19-3269-MGL-PJG, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 73016, at \*16-17 (D.S.C. Apr. 23, 2020). In other words, venue is proper in his District because Defendant is subject to personal jurisdiction in this District. See Big Guy's Pinball, LLC v. Lipham, No. 14-CV-14185, 2015 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 89512, at \*2 (E.D. Mich. July 10, 2015).

### **FACTS**

#### I. Plaintiff's Business and History

- 6. Plaintiff is in the business of licensing high-end, professional photographs for the food industry.
- 7. Through its commercial website (<a href="www.preparedfoodphotos.com">www.preparedfoodphotos.com</a>), Plaintiff offers a monthly subscription service which provides access to/license of tens of thousands of professional images.
- 8. Plaintiff charges its clients (generally, grocery stores, restaurant chains, food service companies, etc.) a minimum monthly fee of \$999.00 for access to its library of professional photographs.
- 9. Plaintiff does not license individual photographs or otherwise make individual photographs available for purchase. Plaintiff's business model relies on its recurring monthly subscription service such that Plaintiff can continue to maintain its impressive portfolio.

10. Plaintiff owns each of the photographs available for license on its website and serves as the licensing agent with respect to licensing such photographs for limited use by Plaintiff's customers. To that end, Plaintiff's standard terms include a limited, non-transferable license for us of any photograph by the customer only. Plaintiff's license terms make clear that all copyright ownership remains with Plaintiff and that its customers are not permitted to transfer, assign, or sub-license any of Plaintiff's photographs to another person/entity.

### II. The Work at Issue in this Lawsuit

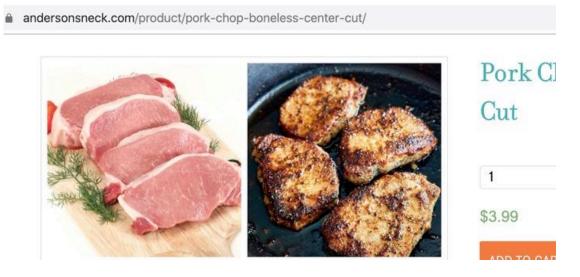
11. In 1997, Plaintiff created a photograph titled "RawPorkChopCCBnls005\_ADL." (the "Work"). A copy of the Work is exhibited below:



- 12. The Work was registered by Plaintiff with the Register of Copyrights on January 20, 2017 and was assigned Registration No. VA 2-027-172. A true and correct copy of the Certification of Registration pertaining to the Work is attached hereto as **Exhibit "A."**
- 13. Plaintiff is the owner of the Work and has remained the owner at all times material hereto.

#### III. Defendant's Unlawful Activities

- 14. Defendant is a Shacklefords, Virginia restaurant and oyster farm specializing in the sale of fresh oysters and seafood from the Chesapeake Bay. Additionally, Defendant also serves and sells a variety of meat, including fresh meat, cold cuts and sausages.
- 15. Defendant advertises/markets its business primarily through its website (<a href="https://andersonsneck.com/">https://andersonsneck.com/</a>), social media (<a href="https://twitter.com/AndersonsNeck">https://twitter.com/AndersonsNeck</a>, <a href="https://www.facebook.com/AndersonsNeck">https://www.facebook.com/AndersonsNeck</a>, <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/andersonsneck">https://www.youtube.com/user/andersonsneck</a>), and other forms of advertising.
- 16. On a date after Plaintiff's above-referenced copyright registration of the Work, Defendant published the Work on its website (at <a href="https://www.andersonsneck.com/product/pork-chop-boneless-center-cut/">https://www.andersonsneck.com/product/pork-chop-boneless-center-cut/</a>) in connection with the sale of boneless center-cut pork chops:



- 17. A true and correct copy of screenshots of Defendant's website, displaying the copyrighted Work, is attached hereto as **Exhibit "B."**
- 18. Defendant is not and has never been licensed to use or display the Work. Defendant never contacted Plaintiff to seek permission to use the Work in connection with Defendant's

website, social media, or for any other purpose.

- 19. Defendant utilized the Work for commercial use namely, in connection with the marketing of Defendant's business.
- 20. Upon information and belief, Defendant located a copy of the Work on the internet and, rather than contact Plaintiff to secure a license, simply copied the Work for its own commercial use.
- 21. Through its ongoing diligent efforts to identify unauthorized use of its photographs, Plaintiff discovered Defendants' unauthorized use/display of the Work May 21, 2020. Following Plaintiff's discovery, Plaintiff (through its agents) notified Defendants in writing of such unauthorized use. To date, Plaintiff has been unable to negotiate a reasonable license for the past infringement of its Work.
  - 22. All conditions precedent to this action have been performed or have been waived.

### **COUNT I – COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT**

- 23. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates paragraphs 1 through 22 as set forth above.
- 24. The Work is an original work of authorship, embodying copyrightable subject matter, that is subject to the full protection of the United States copyright laws (17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*).
- 25. Plaintiff owns a valid copyright in the Work, having registered the Work with the Register of Copyrights and owning sufficient rights, title, and interest to such copyright to afford Plaintiff standing to bring this lawsuit and assert the claim(s) herein.
- 26. As a result of Plaintiff's reproduction, distribution, and public display of the Work, Defendant had access to the Work prior to its own reproduction, distribution, and public display of the Work on Defendant's website.

- 27. Defendant reproduced, distributed, and publicly displayed the Work without authorization from Plaintiff.
- 28. By its actions, Defendant directly infringed and violated Plaintiff's exclusive rights in violation of the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. § 501, by reproducing, distributing, and publicly displaying the Work for its own commercial purposes and for the commercial purposes.
- 29. Defendant's infringement was willful as it acted with actual knowledge or reckless disregard for whether its conduct infringed upon Plaintiff's copyright. Notably, Defendant itself utilizes a copyright disclaimer on its website ("©2023 Andersons Neck, LLC DBA Andersons Neck Oyster Company"), indicating that Defendant understands the importance of copyright protection and intellectual property rights and is actually representing that it owns each of the photographs published on its website. See, e.g., Bell v. ROI Prop. Grp. Mgmt., LLC, No. 1:18cv-00043-TWP-DLP, 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 127717, at \*3 (S.D. Ind. July 31, 2018) ("[T]he willfulness of ROI's infringement is evidenced by the fact that at the bottom of the webpage on which the Indianapolis photograph was unlawfully published appeared the following: 'Copyright © 2017.' By placing a copyright mark at the bottom of its webpage that contained Mr. Bell's copyrighted Indianapolis Photograph, Mr. Bell asserts ROI willfully infringed his copyright by claiming that it owned the copyright to everything on the webpage."); John Perez Graphics & Design, LLC v. Green Tree Inv. Grp., Inc., Civil Action No. 3:12-cv-4194-M, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 61928, at \*12-13 (N.D. Tex. May 1, 2013) ("Once on Defendant's website, Defendant asserted ownership of Plaintiff's Registered Work by including a copyright notice at the bottom of the page. Based on these allegations, the Court finds Plaintiff has sufficiently pled a willful violation...."). Defendant clearly understands that professional photography such as the Work is generally paid for and cannot simply be copied from the internet.

- 30. Plaintiff has been damaged as a direct and proximate result of Defendant's infringement.
- 31. Plaintiff is entitled to recover its actual damages resulting from Defendant's unauthorized use of the Work and, at Plaintiff's election (pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(b)), Plaintiff is entitled to recover damages based on a disgorgement of Defendant's profits from infringement of the Work, which amounts shall be proven at trial.
- 32. Defendant's conduct has caused, and any continued infringing conduct will continue to cause, irreparable injury to Plaintiff unless enjoined by the Court. Plaintiff has no adequate remedy at law. Pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 502, Plaintiff is entitled to a permanent injunction prohibiting infringement of Plaintiff's exclusive rights under copyright law.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant as follows:

- a. A declaration that Defendant has infringed Plaintiff's copyrights in the Work;
- b. A declaration that such infringement is willful (to the extent applicable);
- c. An award of actual damages and disgorgement of profits as the Court deems proper or, at Plaintiff's election (if applicable), an award of statutory damages for willful infringement up to \$150,000.00 for each infringement of the Work;
- d. Awarding Plaintiff its costs and (if applicable) reasonable attorneys' fees pursuant to 17
   U.S.C. § 505;
- e. Awarding Plaintiff interest, including prejudgment interest, on the foregoing amounts;
- f. Permanently enjoining Defendant, its employees, agents, officers, directors, attorneys, successors, affiliates, subsidiaries and assigns, and all those in active concert and participation with Defendant, from directly or indirectly infringing Plaintiff's copyrights or continuing to display, transfer, advertise, reproduce, or otherwise market any works derived or copied from the Work or to participate or assist in any such activity; and

g. For such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

## **Demand For Jury Trial**

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all issued so triable.

Dated: May 16, 2023. Prepared Food Photos, Inc.

By: /s/Matthew W. Smith\_\_\_\_\_\_ Counsel

Matthew W. Smith Va. State Bar No. 44558 Attorney for the Plaintiff OTEY SMITH & QUARLES 485 McLaws Circle Williamsburg, VA 23185 T 757.903.2665 F 757.561.2378 MSMITH@OSQLAW.COM

Exhibit "A"

### Certificate of Registration



This Certificate issued under the seal of the Copyright Office in accordance with title 17, United States Code, attests that registration has been made for the work identified below. The information on this certificate has been made a part of the Copyright Office records.

**Registration Number** VA 2-027-172 **Effective Date of Registration:** January 20, 2017

Acting United States Register of Copyrights and Director

**Title** 

Title of Work: ADLIFE-COLLECTION-011717

**Previous or Alternate Title:** Group registration of photos published 01-04-1997 through 12-05-1997; about

250 photos total.

**Content Title:** ChickenThighs3FSHC1306, 02-05-1997;

ClamChowder3FSHC1301, 10-05-1997; CoconutCreamPieFSHC1306, 02-05-1997;

EggBacon007\_ADL, 01-15-1997;

EggSteak001\_ADL, 03-22-1997;

GranolaYogurtBowl003\_ADL, 07-13-1997; HoagieSandwich3FSHC1305, 01-14-1997;

Omelette003\_ADL, 04-09-1997;

PorkChopsGrilled3FSHC1305, 02-05-1997;

RoundRoast3FSHC1303, 11-16-1997;

HamBoiledDinner001\_ADL, 04-08-1997;

HamDinner001\_ADL, 11-05-1997;

HamDinner002\_ADL, 08-18-1997;

HamDinner003\_ADL, 08-18-1997;

HamDinner004\_ADL, 08-18-1997;

HamDinner005\_ADL, 02-08-1997;

HamDinner006\_ADL, 05-05-1997;

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HamSpiralDinner001\_ADL, 08-18-1997;

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HamSpiralDinner005\_ADL, 08-18-1997;

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## Completion/Publication

1997 **Year of Completion:** 

**Date of 1st Publication:** Nation of 1st Publication:

January 04, 1997 **United States** 

#### Author

**Author:** 

ADLIFE Marketing & Communications Co., Inc., Employer-for-Hire of Joel

Albrizio

**Author Created:** 

photograph

Work made for hire:

Yes

Domiciled in:

**United States** 

# Copyright Claimant

Copyright Claimant: Adlife Marketing & Communications Co. Inc.

38 CHURCH ST, PAWTUCKET, RI, 02860-3906, United States

# Rights and Permissions

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## Certification

Name: MILTON M. OLIVER, Esq.

**Date**: January 20, 2017

**Applicant's Tracking Number**: 873-057-344

Correspondence: Yes

Copyright Office notes: Regarding publication: range of publication dates is 1/04/1997 to 12/05/1997

Exhibit "B"

andersonsneck.com/product/pork-chop-boneless-center-cut/



JS 44 (Rev. 04/21)

## **CIVIL COVER SHEET**

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	•	DEFE	NDANTS			
PREPARED FOOD PHOTOS, INC. f/k/a ADLIFE MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS CO., INC.			ANDERSONS NECK, LLC d/b/a ANDERSONS NECK OYSTER COMPANY			
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Broward			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant King and Queen			
(E)	XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)	NOTE:	IN LAND CONI	(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES OF DEMNATION CASES, USE THE FLAND INVOLVED.		
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A	Address, and Telephone Number)	Attorne	eys (If Known)			
OTEY SMITH &	QUARLES, 485 McLaws Circle,					
Williamsburg, VA	A 23185   Tel. 757.903.2665					
II. BASIS OF JURISD	ICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)				Place an "X" in One Box for Plaint	
1 U.S. Government	1 U.S. Government X 3 Federal Question Plaintiff (U.S. Government Not a Party)		ty Cases Only) PTF	DEF	and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF	
Plaintiff			ite 1	1 Incorporated or Pri	incipal Place 4 4	
				of Business In T	his State	
2 U.S. Government	4 Diversity	Citizen of Another	State 2	2 Incorporated and P		
Defendant	(Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)			of Business In A	nother State	
		Citizen or Subject		3 Foreign Nation	6 6	
TET BLAMBURE OF CHIE	n	Foreign Country				
IV. NATURE OF SUIT	(Place an "X" in One Box Only) TORTS	TOXABLE PROPERTY TO		lick here for: Nature of S	The state of the s	
CONTRACT 110 Insurance	PERSONAL INJURY PERSONAL INJUR	Y 625 Drug Relat		BANKRUPTCY 422 Appeal 28 USC 158	375 False Claims Act	
120 Marine	310 Airplane 365 Personal Injury -		21 USC 881	423 Withdrawal	376 Qui Tam (31 USC	
130 Miller Act	315 Airplane Product Product Liability	690 Other		28 USC 157	3729(a))	
140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment	Liability 367 Health Care/ 320 Assault, Libel & Pharmaceutical			INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS	400 State Reapportionment 410 Antitrust	
& Enforcement of Judgment	Slander • Personal Injury		×		430 Banks and Banking	
151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted	330 Federal Employers' Product Liability Liability 368 Asbestos Personal	.		830 Patent	450 Commerce 460 Deportation	
Student Loans	340 Marine Injury Product		-	835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application	470 Racketeer Influenced and	
(Excludes Veterans)  153 Recovery of Overpayment	345 Marine Product Liability   Liability   PERSONAL PROPER	TY LABO		840 Trademark	Corrupt Organizations	
of Veteran's Benefits	350 Motor Vehicle 370 Other Fraud	710 Fair Labor	THE RESERVE AND THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN 2 IS NOT THE PERSON NAM	880 Defend Trade Secrets Act of 2016	480 Consumer Credit (15 USC 1681 or 1692)	
160 Stockholders' Suits	355 Motor Vehicle 371 Truth in Lending	Act			485 Telephone Consumer	
190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability	Product Liability 380 Other Personal 360 Other Personal Property Damage	720 Labor/Man Relations	agement	861 HIA (1395ff)	Protection Act 490 Cable/Sat TV	
196 Franchise	Injury 385 Property Damage		abor Act	862 Black Lung (923)	850 Securities/Commodities/	
	362 Personal Injury - Product Liability Medical Malpractice	751 Family and Leave Act	Medical	863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) 864 SSID Title XVI	Exchange	
REAL PROPERTY	CIVIL RIGHTS   PRISONER PETITIO		or Litigation	865 RSI (405(g))	890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts	
210 Land Condemnation	440 Other Civil Rights Habeas Corpus:	791 Employee	Parties .		893 Environmental Matters	
220 Foreclosure	441 Voting 463 Alien Detainee 442 Employment 510 Motions to Vacate	Income Se	curity Act	FEDERAL TAX SUITS	895 Freedom of Information	
230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 240 Torts to Land	442 Employment 510 Motions to Vacate 443 Housing/ Sentence	'	<u> </u>	370 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant)	Act 896 Arbitration	
245 Tort Product Liability	Accommodations 530 General			871 IRS—Third Party	899 Administrative Procedure	
290 All Other Real Property	445 Amer. w/Disabilities - 535 Death Penalty Employment Other:	1MMIGR 462 Naturalizat		26 USC 7609	Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision	
	446 Amer. w/Disabilities - 540 Mandamus & Oth	er 465 Other Imm			950 Constitutionality of	
	Other 550 Civil Rights 448 Education 555 Prison Condition	Actions	1		State Statutes	
	560 Civil Detainee -		1			
	Conditions of Confinement		1			
V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" is						
	moved from 3 Remanded from	4 Reinstated or	5 Transferre			
	te Court Appellate Court	Reopened	Another D	Transfer	- Litigation - Direct File	
VI CAUSE OF ACTIO	Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you a 17 U.S.C. 501	Te ming (Do not cue ju	risaiciionai siaiute	es uniess aiversity).		
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	Brief description of cause: Copyright Infringement					
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.	N DEMAND \$		CHECK YES only in JURY DEMAND:	if demanded in complaint:  Yes No	
VIII. RELATED CASI	E(S)					
IF ANY	(See instructions): JUDGE			DOCKET NUMBER		
DATE		TORNEY OF RECORD				
May 16, 2023	/s/ Matthew W. Smit					
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY						
	MOUNT APPLYING IEP		HIDGE	MAG IIII	OGE	